

HS  
397  
N55

CORNELL  
UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY



MISCELLANY OF THE IOWA MASONIC LIBRARY, CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

# THE MISSION OF MASONRY

*By* JOSEPH FORT NEWTON



PRINTED FOR THE LIBRARY

1912

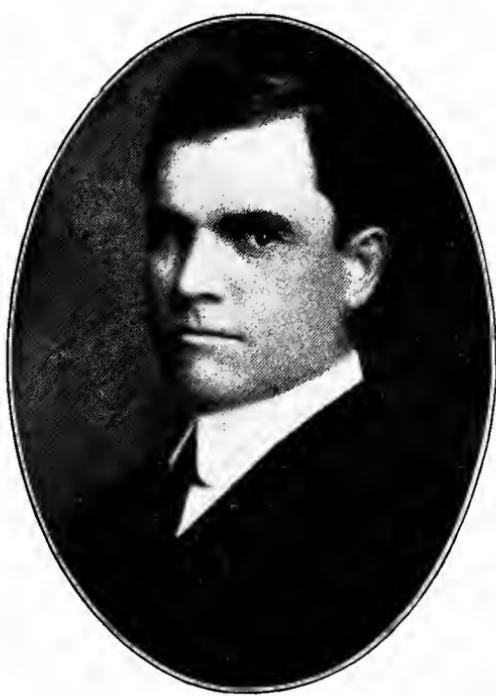


# Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.





REV. JOSEPH FORT NEWTON





# The Mission of Masonry

BY

Rev. Brother Joseph Fort Newton, D. Litt.

GRAND CHAPLAIN, GRAND LODGE OF IOWA, A. F. AND A. M., AND  
CHAPLAIN OF MT. HERMON LODGE, No. 263, OF CEDAR RAPIDS

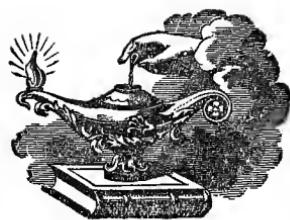
---



An address delivered before the  
Grand Lodge of Iowa, A. F. and A. M., at the  
Sixty-ninth Annual Communication  
held at Burlington  
June thirteenth, nineteen hundred and twelve

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA  
PRINTED FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION  
1912

*D. N. F.*



## EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS

At the Sixty-ninth Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, A., F. & A. M., held at Burlington, June 13, 1912, Rev. Brother Joseph Fort Newton delivered an address on the "Mission of Masonry," at the close of which the following resolution was unanimously adopted by a rising vote:

*Resolved*, That the Grand Chaplain be requested to furnish manuscript copy of his address for publication in the Proceedings, and that while in type extra copies be published in pamphlet form in sufficient numbers for distribution to the subordinate lodges.

We give herewith extracts of the correspondence between Grand Master Block and the Grand Chaplain leading to the preparation and delivery of Grand Chaplain's address, which we trust will make the reading of same more interesting.

NEWTON R. PARVIN,  
*Grand Secretary.*

---

[Extracts of correspondence between Grand Master and Grand Chaplain leading to preparation and delivery of Grand Chaplain's address.]

JUNE 22, 1911.

*Rev. Joseph F. Newton, Grand Chaplain, Grand Lodge, Cedar Rapids, Iowa:*

DEAR BROTHER NEWTON:—I want to speak to you about a matter that lies very close to my heart. I wish I could persuade you to prepare and deliver at the session of the Grand Lodge which will meet in Burlington next June an address on the subject "The Mission of Masonry." This is a theme which has haunted my waking thoughts for many a long day and like the central idea of some great musical inspiration it continues to cry out for adequate expression, an expression which I have not been able to give it, and I believe that I have at last found in you *a man big enough to write and sing this song.*

Will you not take this under consideration and give me a favorable reply?

Sincerely your friend and brother,  
LOUIS BLOCK,  
*Grand Master.*

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA, June 24, 1911.

*Hon. Louis Block, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge, Davenport, Iowa:*

MY DEAR BROTHER:—I have your good and kind letter of the 22d, and thank you for it most sincerely. \* \* \* \*

I had read your last Report on Fraternal Correspondence, which I enjoyed to the full, and am glad to have the earlier volume. I note that you say that, if asked, you would define Masonry as a “creedless religion.” So it is in very truth, and I think we may also use the word church—for, did not Ruskin say that “there is a true church wherever one hand meets another helpfully—the only holy or mother church that ever was or ever shall be?” Then, too, your word, when you assume office, that you intended to labor not simply for an increase of numbers, but for the strengthening of Masonry along “intellectual, artistic, and spiritual paths,” found response in me as being the one supreme end to which my labors in its behalf, such as they are, are devoted.

To that end, I shall undertake as you request, though not without reluctance, to deliver the address on “The Mission of Masonry.” When I think of such a theme, which, as you say, might well be the motive of a supreme symphony, the words of Milton come to mind, and become my prayer:

“O, Spirit, what in me is dark  
I lumine, what is low raise and support;  
That to the height of this great argument,  
I may assert eternal brotherhood.”

With all the good wishes, both for yourself and for the year of rich and fruitful services before you, I am

Yours fraternally,

JOSEPH F. NEWTON.

DAVENPORT, IOWA, June 27, 1911.

*Rev. Joseph F. Newton, Grand Chaplain, Grand Lodge of Iowa, Cedar Rapids, Iowa:*

MY DEAR BROTHER NEWTON:— \* \* \* What gives me the greatest pleasure, however, is to know that you have allowed me to impose on you by getting you to agree to deliver an address on the Mission of Masonry. I know it will be an event in the history of the Grand Lodge. I want it to come as the climax of my administration. I can see in your letter signs of the coming splendor of this address. You approach the theme as the great masters always do—reverently, appealing for inspiration to the only genuine source of inspiration. The rising melodies of this great theme seem already to be murmuring within you.

All I have to say is, give yourself full reign. Throw away the curb. Let it come. Write it out if you choose, but don't let the matter of making a record or of polishing up sentences worry you for an instant. We will have a stenographer there, a court reporter if you please, and we will catch that speech as it comes hot from the forge. You can go over the manuscript afterwards and fix it to suit yourself. We will publish that address in full in our printed Proceedings and send it ringing around the world—this golden gospel of human brotherhood. I shall get over the state quite a little during my year's work and will tell the boys that they will miss it if they don't come to Grand Lodge—tell them about the great event but hold back the speaker's name, stir their curiosity to make them come.

Sincerely your friend,

LOUIS BLOCK.



## THE MISSION OF MASONRY

*Most Worshipful Grand Master and Members of the Grand Lodge:*



O-DAY we have erected a bronze tablet marking the site of the first lodge of Masons in the territory of Iowa. Such a memorial of our fathers, the pioneers, is in accord with the fitness of things.

It bespeaks a sense of history, a vision of the past out of which the present has come to flower, and from whose wise and prophetic sowing the fruit of the future will grow. We honor ourselves by thus recalling the men of other days, but we also lay upon ourselves the obligation to labor, as they labored, with forward-looking thoughts, while establishing more firmly the work of their hands. Others have labored; we have entered into their labors, and it behooves us to continue that sacred history.

Those sturdy men who set up the altar of Masonry on the frontier of this commonwealth were prophetic souls. They were men of faith who builded better than they knew, as men of faith always do. They believed in the future, in the growth of large things from small beginnings, and in the principles of Masonry as the true foundation of society and the fortress of a free state. They knew that the Masonic lodge is a silent partner of the home, the church, and the school house, toiling in behalf of law and order, without which neither industry nor art can flourish, and that its benign influence would help to build this commonwealth in strength, wisdom, and beauty. Therefore they erected their altar and kindled its flame; and

having wrought in faithfulness, they died in faith, obeying the injunction of that master poet who said:

"Keep the young generations in hail,  
Bequeath to them no tumbled house!"

Time has more than fulfilled their dream; the facts have outrun their faith. If men see, after death, what passes on this earth, what a picture now lies spread out for their rejoicing vision. They behold not only our lakes, hills, and rolling prairies, our rivers running to the sea, our cities shining in the sunlight, trains moving to and fro like shuttles in a loom, park like farms dotted with homes, school houses and children at play, temples of prayer and the sleeping places of the dead; but also the march of ideas, the growth and flowering of principles, the unfolding of truths, the increase of liberty, justice, and fraternity among men, and the mystic ties of memory uniting the present in which we toil with the past in which they labored and fell asleep. Their greatest happiness must consist in seeing their good influences widening out from year to year, as rivulets widen into rivers, and shaping the current of history, as our influence, for weal or woe, will help to shape the times to come.

Under the spell of such a vision we may well pause, look before and after, and ask ourselves the meaning of this fraternity, and its mission among men. One of the most impressive and touching things in human history is that certain ideal interests have been set apart as especially venerated among all peoples. Guilds have arisen to cultivate the interests embodied in art, science, philosophy, fraternity, and religion, to train men in their service, to bring their power to bear upon the common life of mortals and send through that

common life the glory of the ideal, as the sun shoots its transfiguring rays through the great dull cloud, evoking beauty from the brown earth. Such is Masonry, which unites all these high interests and brings to their service a vast, world-wide fraternity of free men, built upon a basis of spiritual faith, whose mission it is to make men friends, to refine and exalt their lives, to turn them from the semblance of life to homage for truth, righteousness, and character. Forming one great society over the whole globe, it upholds every noble and redeeming ideal of humanity, making all good things better by its presence, like a meadow that rests on a subterranean stream. He who would reckon the spiritual possessions of our race must take account of the genius of Masonry, and its ministry to the highest life of man.

The very existence of such a great historic fellowship in the quest and service of the ideal is a fact eloquent beyond all words. It is like some lofty mountain uplifted in the midst of the years, at whose feet the generations come and go, whose air sweetens the world, and whose peak assembles the vagrant clouds and invokes showers of refreshing. Apparitions of a day, what is our puny warfare against ignorance and evil compared with the warfare which this venerable order has been waging against them for centuries, and will wage after we are gone. More than an institution, more than a tradition, more than a society, Masonry is one of the forms of the Divine life upon earth. No one may ever hope to describe a spirit so benign and beautiful, an influence so quiet, so un-resting, so persistent, and so gracious. That task belongs of right to the genius of poetry and song, by whose magic those elusive and impalpable realities which hallow the world find

embodiment and voice. All that one can do is to state the faith of Masonry, its philosophy, the basis of its demand for freedom, and its plea for universal friendship.

## I.

On the threshhold of the Masonic lodge every man, whether prince or peasant, is asked to confess his faith in God the Father Almighty, the Architect and Master-builder of the world. That is not a mere form of words. To be indifferent to God is to be indifferent to the greatest of all realities, that upon which the aspiration of humanity rests for its uprising passion and desire. No institution that is dumb concerning the ultimate meaning and character of this universe can last. It is a house built upon the sand, doomed to fall when the winds blow and the floods beat upon it. No human brotherhood that has not its foundation in a Divine Fatherhood can long endure. It is a rope of sand, weak as water, and its fine sentiment quickly evaporates. Life leads, if we follow its meanings and move in the drift of its deeper conclusions, to one God as the ground of the world, and upon that ground Masonry lays its corner-stone. Therefore, it endures, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

That reverent and enlightened faith from which, as from a never-failing spring, flow heroic devotedness, moral self-respect, authentic sentiments of fraternity, inflexible fidelity and effectual consolations, honor in life and hope in death, this great order has in all times religiously preserved. Ardently and perseveringly it has propagated it through the centuries, and in our age more zealously than ever. Scaroely a Masonic discourse is pronounced, or a Masonic lesson read,

by the highest officer or the humblest lecturer, that does not earnestly teach two extremely simple and profound principles —love of God and love of our fellow man. That is the one true religion, and it is the very spirit of Masonry, its light and power, its basis and apex. Upon that faith it rests; in that faith it lives; and by that faith it will conquer, putting the doubts and bigotries of men to shame with its simple insight, and the dignity of its golden voice.

Of no one age, Masonry belongs to all time; of no one religion, it finds great truths in all. Indeed, it holds that truth which is common to all\* elevating and benign religions, and is the basis of each; that faith which underlies all sects and over-arches all creeds, the sky above and the river bed below the flow of mortal years. It is not a religion, still less a cult, but it is a worship in which all good men may unite, that each may share the faith of all. It does not undertake to explain or dogmatically to settle those great mysteries which out-top human knowledge. Beyond the facts of faith it does not go. With the subtleties of speculation concerning these truths, and the unworldly envies growing out of them, it has not to do. There divisions begin, and Masonry was not made to divide men, but to unite them. It asks not for tolerance, but for fraternity, leaving each man free to think his own thought and fashion his own system of ultimate truth. Therefore, all through the ages it has been, and is today, a meeting place of differing minds, and a prophecy of the final union of all reverent and devout souls.

In the olden time one man framed a dogma and declared it to be the eternal truth. Another man did the same thing; then the two began to hate each other with an unholy hatred,

each trying to impose his private scheme of the universe upon the other, and that is an epitome of some of the blackest pages of history. Against those old sectarians who substituted intolerance for charity, persecution for friendship, and did not love God because they hated their neighbors, Masonry made perpetual protest in a voice which is now becoming the eloquence of the world. A vast change of heart is now taking place in the religious world, by reason of an exchange of thought and courtesy, and a closer personal touch, and the various sects, so long estranged, are learning to unite upon the things most worth while and the least open to debate. That is to say, they are moving toward the Masonic position, and when they arrive Masonry will preside over a scene which she prophesied from the beginning.

At last, in the not distant future, the old and bitter feuds of the sects will come to an end. Our little systems will have their day and cease to be, lost in the vision of a truth so great that all men are one in their littleness; one in their victorious assurance of "the ultimate decency of things, and the kindness of the veiled Father of men." Then men of every creed will ask, when they meet:

"Not what is your creed?  
But what is your need?"

What is your vision of the meaning of this infinite universe, luminous and dark, glorious and terrible, in which we live? Then Masonry, having fulfilled a part of its sublime and prophetic mission upon earth, will rejoice. High above all dogmas that bind, all bigotries that blind, all bitterness that divides it will write the eternal verities of the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the moral law, the golden rule, and the hope of a life everlasting!

## II.

Out of this simple faith grows the philosophy which Masonry teaches in signs and symbols, in pictures and parables. Stated freely, stated sympathetically, it is that behind the pageant of nature, in it and over it, there is a Supreme Mind which initiates, impels, and controls all. That behind the life of man and its pathetic story in history, in it and over it, there is a righteous will, the intelligent conscience of the Most High. In short, that the first and last thing in the universe is mind, that the highest and deepest thing is conscience, and that the final reality is the absoluteness of love. Higher than that faith cannot fly; deeper than that thought cannot go.

There is but one real alternative of this philosophy. It is not atheism, because the adherents of atheism are too few, and its intellectual position is too precarious ever to be a menace. An atheist is an orphan, a waif wandering the midnight streets of time, homeless and alone. Nor is the alternative agnosticism, which in the nature of things can be only a passing mood of thought, when, indeed, it is not a confession of intellectual bankruptcy, or a labor-saving devise to escape the toil and fatigue of high thinking. It trembles in perpetual hesitation, like the donkey equi-distant between two bundles of hay, starving to death but unable to make a decision. No, the real alternative is materialism, which played so large a part in scholarly circles fifty years ago, and which, defeated there, has betaken itself to the field of opportunity and practical affairs. This is the dread alternative of a denial of faith, a blight which would apply a sponge to all the high

aspirations and ideals of our race. According to this dogma, the last things in the universe are atoms, their number, dance, combination, and growth. All mind, all will, all emotion, all character, all love is incidental, transitory, vain. The sovereign fact is mud, the final reality is dirt!

Against this horror Masonry has in every age stood as a witness for the soul. In the war of the mind against dust, in the choice between dirt and Deity, it has allied itself on the side of the great idealisms and optimisms of humanity. It takes the spiritual view of life and the world as being most in accord with the facts of experience, the promptings of right reason, the voice of conscience, and the vision of the soul. It dares to read the meaning of the universe through what is highest in human nature, not through what is lower; to assert that the soul is akin to an eternal spirit, and therefore deathless as God its Father is deathless. Think of what it means to say that. It means that what a man thinks, the manner of his feeling, the character of his activity and career are of vital and ceaseless concern to the eternal God. It means that we are not shapes of mud placed here by chance, but sons of the Most High, citizens of eternity, and that there is laid upon us an abiding obligation to live in a manner befitting the dignity and worth of the soul.

Here is a philosophy which lights up the world like a sunrise, evolving meaning out of mystery, and hope out of what would else be despair. It brings out the colors of human life, investing our fleeting mortal years—brief at their longest, broken at their best—with enduring significance and beauty. It gives each of us, however humble and obscure, a place and a part in the stupendous historical enterprise;

makes us fellow workers with the Eternal in His redemptive making of humanity, and binds us to do His will upon earth as it is done in heaven. It subdues the intellect; it touches the heart; it begets in the will that sense of self-respect without which high and heroic living cannot be. Such is the philosophy upon which Masonry rests; and from it flow those bright streams that wander through and water this human world of ours.

### III.

Because this is so; because the human soul is akin to God, and is endowed with powers to which no one may set a limit, it is and of right ought to be free. Thus, by the logic of its philosophy, not less than by the inspiration of its faith, Masonry has been impelled to make its historic demand for liberty of conscience, for the freedom of the intellect, and for the right of all men to stand erect, unfettered, and unafraid, equal before God and the law, each respecting the rights of his fellows. What we have to remember is, that before this truth found embodiment in any political constitution it was embedded in the will of God and the constitution of the human soul. If the Magna Charta demanded rights which government can grant, Masonry from the first asserted those inalienable rights of man derived from God the Father of man. Nor will it ever swerve one jot or tittle from its ancient and eloquent demand till all men, everywhere, are free in body, mind, and soul.

Never did this truth find sweeter voice than in the tones of the old Scotch fiddle on which Robert Burns, a Master Mason, sang, in lyric glee, of the sacredness of humanity, and the

native divinity of human nature as the only lawful basis of society and the state. That music, heard long before in every Masonic lodge, went marching on, striding over continents, and trampling kingdoms down until it took form in the declaration of independence and constitution of this republic, over whose birth Masonry presided and with whose growth it has had so much to do. It was not an accident that the Boston Tea Party, with its protest against taxation without representation, was planned in a Masonic lodge and executed by its members. Nor should we forget that the convention which framed our constitution, with four men absent, could have been opened in form as a Masonic lodge. The fathers of this nation, inspired by Masonry, dared to assert the divine right of man to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, to secure which governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

So it has been all through our national history—of which, if you are not proud, you ought to have public prayers said for you next Sunday—and today this great order, with its plea for liberty, equality, and fraternity, is worth more for the safety and sanctity of this republic than both its army and its navy. At every turn of events, when the rights of man have been threatened by enemies open and obvious, or subtle and insidious, Masonry has stood guard. In time of conflict she has softened the horrors of war, and in time of peace her altar light has shone as a signal fire along the heights of liberty, keeping watch over the principles wrought out by the blood and prayers and tears of our fathers. Not only in our own land, but everywhere over the broad earth, when men have thrown off the yoke of tyranny and demanded the

rights that belong to manhood, they have found a friend in the Masonic order. Nor must we be less alert and vigilant today when, free of the danger of foes from without, our republic is imperilled by the negligence of indifference, the seduction of luxury, and the shadow of a passion-clouded, impatient discontent, whose end is madness and folly.

"Love thou thy land, with love far-brought  
From out the storied past, and used  
Within the present, but transfused  
Through future time by power of thought."

Some day, when the cloud of prejudice has been dispelled by the searchlight of truth, the world will honor Masonry for its heroic service to freedom of thought and the liberty of faith. No part of its ministry has been more noble, no principle of its teaching has been more precious than its age-long and unwavering demand for the right and duty of every soul to seek that light by which no man was ever injured, and that truth which makes man free. Down through the ages—often when the highest crime was not murder, but thinking, and when the human conscience was dragged as a slave at the wheel of the ecclesiastical chariot—always and everywhere Masonry has stood for the right of the soul to know the truth, and to look up unhindered from the lap of earth into the face of Him in whose great hand it stands. Not freedom from faith, but freedom of faith, has been its watchword, on the ground that as despotism is the mother of anarchy, so bigoted dogmatism is the prolific source of scepticism.

Against those who would fetter thought in order to perpetuate an effete authority, who would give the skinny hand of the past a scepter to rule the aspiring and prophetic

present, and seal the lips of living thinkers with the dicta of dead scholastics, Masonry will never ground arms. Her plea is for government without tyranny and religion without superstition, and as surely as the suns rise and set her fight will be crowned with victory. She fights not with force, still less with intrigue, but with the power of truth, the persuasions of reason, and the might of gentleness, seeking not to destroy her enemies but to win them to the liberty of the truth and the fellowship of love.

#### IV.

For, if there be a God at all, who is the life of all that was, is, and is to be, that God must be the Father of all mankind; and if we are all born into this world by one high wisdom and one vast love, then we are brothers to the last man of us, forever. For better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part, men are held together by ties of spiritual kinship, sons of one eternal Father. Upon this spiritual fact must rest every real human fraternity, and it is the basis of the age-old plea of Masonry not only for freedom, but for friendship among men. And, though long delayed—

"It's comin' yet for a' that,  
And man to man, the world o'er,  
Shall brothers be for a' that."

Our human history, saturated with blood and blistered with tears, is the story of man making friends with man. Society has evolved from a feud into a friendship, by the slow growth of love and the welding of man first to his kin, and then to his kind. The first men who lived in the red dawn of time lived every man for himself, his heart a sanctuary of suspicions,

every man feeling that every other man was his foe, and therefore his prey. So there was war, strife, and bloodshed. Slowly there came to the savage a gleam of the truth that it is better to help than to hurt, and he organized clans and tribes. But tribes were divided by rivers and mountains, and the men on one side of the river felt that the men on the other side were their enemies. Again there was war, pillage, and sorrow. Great empires arose and met in the shock of conflict, leaving a trail of skeletons across the earth. Then came the great roads, reaching out with their stony clutch and bringing the ends of the earth together. Men met, mingled, passed, and repassed, and learned that human nature is much the same everywhere, with hopes and fears in common. Still there were many things to divide and estrange men from each other, and the earth was full of bitterness.

Not satisfied with natural barriers, men erected high walls of sect and caste, to exclude their fellows, and the men of one sect were sure that the men of all other sects were wrong—and would be lost. Thus, when real mountains no longer estranged man from man, mountains were made out of molehills—mountains of immemorial misunderstanding not yet moved into the sea. Barriers of race, of creed, of caste, of habit, of training, and interest separate men today, as if some malign genius were bent on keeping man from his fellows, begetting suspicion, uncharitableness, and hate. All through the ages men were unfriendly, and, therefore, unjust and cruel, largely because they were unacquainted.

"Here lies the tragedy of our race;  
Not that men are poor;  
All men know something of poverty;  
Not that men are wicked;  
Who can claim to be good?  
Not that men are ignorant;  
Who can boast that he is wise?  
But that men are strangers."

In the meantime—and, verily, it was a mean time—Masonry, the oldest and most widely spread order, was toiling in behalf of friendship, uniting men upon the only basis upon which they can ever meet with dignity, each lodge an oasis of equality and good-will in a desert of feud and strife. At its altar men met as man to man, without vanity and without pretense, without fear and without reproach, held together by common vows to the right, as tourists crossings the Alps tie themselves together, so that if one slip and fall all may hold him up. Its tie of friendship—peculiar, particular, and unique—was like those tiny fibers running through the glaciers, along which sunbeams journey, melting the frozen mass and sending it to the valleys below in rivulets of blessing. Other fibers were there, but none more far-ramifying, none more tender, none more responsive to the light than the mystical tie of Masonic love. No tongue can tell the meaning of that gentle tie binding men together, no pen can trace the influences that traveled along it, melting the hardness of the world into pity.

Toward a great friendship, long foreseen by Masonic faith, the world is slowly moving, amid difficulties and delays; and today the sun looks down and sees men everywhere getting together, as though the race were fast becoming a vast league of sympathy and service. Of that day, which will surely

come, when nations will be reverent in the use of freedom, just in the exercise of power, humane in the practice of wisdom; when no man will ride over the rights of his fellows; when no woman will be made forlorn, no little child wretched, by bigotry or greed, Masonry has ever been a prophet. Nor will she be content until the various threads of human fellowship are woven into one mystic cord of friendship, encircling the earth and holding the race in unity of spirit and the bonds of peace, as in the will of God it is one in origin, history, and end. Having outlived empires and philosophies, having seen generations appear and vanish, she will yet live to see the travail of her soul, and be satisfied—

“When the war-drum throbs no longer,  
And the battle flags are furled;  
In the parliament of man,  
The federation of the world.”

## V.

The Mission of Masonry! Years have fled, like hooded figures in hurried march, since our fathers set up their altar on the frontier, kindled its light and fell asleep, but the spirit and purpose of this ancient order remain. The forms of beauty into which the earth is rushing today are not the forms that greeted their eyes in 1840; the aspect of the sky has changed a thousand times since their eager and faithful vision looked up into it. Time has swept us on the wave of advance into a new world with wider horizons, mightier aspirations, and vaster obligations. But life is the same, unchangeable save for its onward march, the earth abideth, and the sky, though like a fleeting tent, is built anew after the same eternal

model. Just so, though the forms of life alter, and new times demand new methods, the truths of faith and immutable duty of doing good abide.

The Mission of Masonry! He who would describe that must be a poet, a musician, and a seer—a master of melodies, echoes, and long, far-sounding cadencies. Now, as always, it toils to make man better, to refine his thought and purify his dream, to broaden his outlook, to lift his altitude, to establish in amplitude and resoluteness his life in all its relations. All its great history, its vast accumulations of tradition, its simple faith and its solemn rites, its freedom and its friendship are dedicated to a high moral ideal, seeking to tame the tiger in man, and bring all his wild passions into obedience to the will of God. Unwearingly it holds aloft, in picture and in dream, that temple of character which it is the noblest labor of life to build in the midst of the years, and which will outlast time and death. It has no other mission than to exalt and ennable humanity, to bring light out of darkness, beauty out of angularity; to make every hard-won inheritance more secure, every sanctity more sacred, every hope more radiant.

The Mission of Masonry! When the spirit of this order has its way upon earth, as at last it certainly will, society will be a vast league of sympathy and justice, business a system of human service, law a rule of beneficence; the home will be more holy, the laughter of childhood more joyous, and the temple of prayer mortised and tenoned in simple faith. Evil, injustice, bigotry, and greed, and every vile and slimy thing that defiles humanity will skulk into the dark, unable to endure the light of a juster, wiser, more merciful order. Industry will be upright, education prophetic, and religion not a shadow, but a real presence, when man has become ac-

quainted with man and has learned to worship God by serving his fellows. When Masonry is victorious every tyranny will fall, every bastile crumble, and man will be not only unfettered in mind and hand, but free of heart to walk erect in the light and dignity of the truth.

Such is the ideal, and by as much as are true to it, by so much are we loyal to the benign mission of Masonry upon the earth. Fidelity to all that is holy demands that we give ourselves to it, trusting the power of truth, the reality of love, and the sovereign worth of character. For only as we incarnate this vision in actual life and activity does it become real, tangible, and effective. God works for man through man and seldom, if at all, in any other way. He asks for your voice and mine to speak His truth to man, for your hand and mind to do His work here below—sweet voices and clean hands to work His will and make liberty and love prevail over injustice and hate. The most precious wealth in the world is the wealth of established character; it makes all our moral currency valid. Not all of us can be learned or famous, but each of us can be pure of heart, undefiled by evil, undaunted by error, noble and true, faithful and useful to our fellow souls. Life is a capacity for the highest things. Let us make it a pursuit of the highest—an eager, incessant quest of truth; a noble utility; a genuine worth, a lofty honor, a wise freedom—that through us the Mission of Masonry may be yet further advanced.

"I go mine, thou goest thine;  
Many ways we wend,  
Many ways and many days,  
Ending in one end.  
Many a wrong and its crowning song,  
Many a road and many an inn,  
Far to roam, but only one home,  
For all the world to win."







Cornell University Library  
HS397 .N55

The mission of masonry.



3 1924 030 277 028  
olin,anx

